

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for facilitating supplier auditing
2 functions in a communications network environment,
3 comprising:
4 receiving a request from a user system to initiate an
5 activity, said activity provided by an enterprise system
6 among a plurality of activity options;
7 said enterprise system retrieving data from at least
8 one database, said data corresponding to said activity
9 selected; and
10 transmitting said data to said user system;
11 wherein said enterprise system includes a quality
12 information network application for executing said activity
13 options.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said activity
2 includes assessing a supplier record for determining a need
3 to schedule a supplier audit.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein said assessing said
2 supplier record includes reviewing:
3 past audit activity;
4 date of last audit; and
5 results of past audits.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein said activity
2 includes scheduling an audit by a requester.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein said scheduling said
2 audit includes:
3 entering supplier data into a schedule form;
4 entering requester information into said schedule form;
5 selecting an auditor to perform said audit;
6 entering a purpose for said audit;
7 entering a time frame for performing said audit; and
8 distributing a completed schedule form to at least one
9 entity.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein said distributing
2 said completed schedule form is automatically performed by
3 said quality information network application via a
4 distribution list.

1 7. The method of claim 5, wherein said distributing
2 said completed schedule form is manually performed by said
3 requester via a distribution list provided by said
4 requester.

1 8. The method of claim 5, wherein said requester is a
2 divisional user.

1 9. The method of claim 5, wherein said selecting said
2 auditor by said requester includes selection criteria
3 including:

4 geographic location of site to be audited;
5 auditing skills possessed by said auditor;
6 a commodity subject to said audit; and
7 auditor pre-qualification data.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
2 automatically transmitting a notice to said auditor;
3 receiving a response from said auditor by said
4 requester, wherein said response is either a confirmation
5 notice or a rejection notice.

1 11. The method of claim 10, wherein said requester
2 initiates a second auditor selection, based upon receiving
3 said rejection notice.

1 12. The method of claim 5, wherein said entering said
2 time frame for performing said audit includes:
3 entering a date planned for said audit; and
4 entering a quarter planned for said audit.

1 13. The method of claim 1, wherein said activity
2 includes viewing a scheduled audit.

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein said viewing said
2 scheduled audit includes viewing by categories, said
3 categories including:

4 all audits;
5 completed audits; and
6 planned audits.

1 15. The method of claim 13, wherein said viewing said
2 scheduled audit includes viewing by:

3 supplier;
4 region;
5 quarter by region by commodity;
6 year by quarter;
7 product category;
8 requester;
9 auditor;
10 organization; and
11 site owner.

1 16. The method of claim 1, wherein said activity
2 includes providing audit reporting data by an auditor.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said providing said audit reporting data includes:

- providing audit test results;
- providing audit analysis results;
- providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting industry standards;
- providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting government standards;
- providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting proprietor-imposed standards;
- attaching said audit reporting data to a corresponding audit schedule;
- transmitting said audit reporting data and said corresponding audit schedule to a designated entity; and
- proposing corrective actions.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said transmitting said audit reporting data and said corresponding audit schedule is performed automatically by said quality information network application via a distribution list.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein said transmitting said audit reporting data and said corresponding audit schedule is performed manually by said auditor via a distribution list provided by said auditor.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein said activity includes viewing audit reports.

1 21. The method of claim 1, wherein said activity
2 includes viewing training data.

1 22. The method of claim 21, wherein said training data
2 includes:
3 lectures;
4 seminars;
5 classes; and
6 resource materials.

1 23. The method of claim 1, wherein said activity
2 includes viewing executive summary reports.

1 24. The method of claim 1, wherein said activity
2 includes viewing reference data, said reference data
3 including:
4 industry standards;
5 government standards; and
6 proprietor-imposed standards.

25. A method for facilitating supplier auditing functions in a communications network environment, comprising:

- receiving a request from a first enterprise system to contact a web site maintained by a second enterprise system;
- said second enterprise system authenticating a user ID and password of a user of said first enterprise system;
- receiving a request to initiate an activity, said activity provided by said second enterprise system among a plurality of activity options;
- said second enterprise system retrieving data from at least one database, said data corresponding to said activity selected; and
- transmitting said data to said first enterprise system;

wherein said second enterprise system includes a quality information network application for executing said activity options.

1 26. The method of claim 25, further comprising:
2 replicating selected data fields of a database
3 associated with said second enterprise system resulting from
4 a request by said first enterprise to submit data into a
5 supplier response form, said request associated with a first
6 of said activity options;
7 providing access to said database;
8 displaying said supplier response form;
9 receiving response data from said first enterprise
10 system, said response data provided in said supplier
11 response form;
12 storing said response data in said database; and
13 associating said response data with an entity within
14 said second enterprise system.

1 27. The method of claim 26, wherein said entity is a
2 division.

1 28. The method of claim 26, wherein said entity is a
2 commodity.

1 29. The method of claim 26, further comprising:
2 receiving an attached text file with said response
3 data.

1 30. The method of claim 26 wherein said associating
2 said response data with said entity includes:
3 sending a notification to said entity; and
4 making said response data available to said entity.

1 31. The method of claim 25, wherein said
2 communications network environment includes an extranet.

1 32. The method of claim 25, wherein said
2 authenticating said user ID and said password is
3 accomplished via a firewall.

1 33. The method of claim 25, wherein said first
2 enterprise system is a supplier.

1 34. The method of claim 25, wherein said first
2 enterprise system is a contract manufacturer.

1 35. The method of claim 25, wherein said first
2 enterprise system is a trading partner.

1 36. A system for facilitating supplier auditing
2 functions in a communications network environment,
3 comprising:
4 a host system including a web server, an applications
5 server, and a database server;
6 a data storage device in communication with said host
7 system;
8 quality information network software application being
9 executed by said host system;
10 a firewall in communication with said host system;
11 a workstation; and
12 a computer network connecting the host system to the
13 workstation; wherein information inputted into the
14 workstation is transferred to the host system and made
15 available to the quality information network software
16 application.

1 37. The system of claim 36, wherein said data storage
2 device includes:
3 a reference database;
4 an audit schedule database;
5 an audit reports database;
6 an executive summary database; and
7 a supplier quality performance database.

1 38. The system of claim 36, further comprising:
2 a remote device in communication with said host system.

1 39. The system of claim 36, wherein said communication
2 is via the Internet.

1 40. The system of claim 36, wherein said communication
2 is via an extranet.

1 41. A storage medium encoded with machine-readable
2 computer program code for facilitating supplier auditing
3 functions in a communications network environment, the
4 storage medium including instructions for causing an
5 enterprise system to implement a method comprising:

6 receiving a request from a user system to initiate an
7 activity, said activity provided by an enterprise system
8 among a plurality of activity options;

9 said enterprise system retrieving data from at least
10 one database, said data corresponding to said activity
11 selected; and

12 transmitting said data to said user system;

13 wherein said enterprise system includes a quality
14 information network application for executing said activity
15 options.

1 42. The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said
2 activity includes assessing a supplier record for
3 determining a need to schedule a supplier audit.

1 43. The storage medium of claim 42, wherein said
2 assessing said supplier record includes reviewing:
3 past audit activity;
4 date of last audit; and
5 results of past audits.

1 44. The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said
2 activity includes scheduling an audit by a requester.

1 45. The storage medium of claim 44, wherein said
2 scheduling said audit includes:
3 entering supplier data into a schedule form;
4 entering requester information into said schedule form;
5 selecting an auditor to perform said audit;
6 entering a purpose for said audit;
7 entering a time frame for performing said audit; and
8 distributing a completed schedule form to at least one
9 entity.

1 46. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein said
2 distributing said completed schedule form is automatically
3 performed by said quality information network application
4 via a distribution list.

1 47. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein said
2 distributing said completed schedule form is manually
3 performed by said requester via a distribution list provided
4 by said requester.

1 48. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein said
2 requester is a divisional user.

1 49. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein said
2 selecting said auditor by said requester includes selection
3 criteria including:

4 geographic location of site to be audited;
5 auditing skills possessed by said auditor;
6 a commodity subject to said audit; and
7 auditor pre-qualification data.

1 50. The storage medium of claim 49, further comprising
2 instructions for causing a computer to implement:

3 automatically transmitting a notice to said auditor;
4 receiving a response from said auditor by said
5 requester, wherein said response is either a confirmation
6 notice or a rejection notice.

1 51. The storage medium of claim 50, wherein said
2 requester initiates a second auditor selection, based upon
3 receiving said rejection notice.

1 52. The storage medium of claim 45, wherein said
2 entering said time frame for performing said audit includes:
3 entering a date planned for said audit; and
4 entering a quarter planned for said audit.

1 53. The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said
2 activity includes viewing a scheduled audit.

1 54. The storage medium of claim 53, wherein said
2 viewing said scheduled audit includes viewing by categories,
3 said categories including:
4 all audits;
5 completed audits; and
6 planned audits.

1 55. The storage medium of claim 53, wherein said
2 viewing said scheduled audit includes viewing by:
3 supplier;
4 region;
5 quarter by region by commodity;
6 year by quarter;
7 product category;
8 requester;
9 auditor;
10 organization; and
11 site owner.

1 56. The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said
2 activity includes providing audit reporting data by an
3 auditor.

1 57. The storage medium of claim 56, wherein said
2 providing said audit reporting data includes:
3 providing audit test results;
4 providing audit analysis results;
5 providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting
6 industry standards;
7 providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting
8 government standards;
9 providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting
10 proprietor-imposed standards;
11 attaching said audit reporting data to a corresponding
12 audit schedule;
13 transmitting said audit reporting data and said
14 corresponding audit schedule to a designated entity; and
15 proposing corrective actions.

1 58. The storage medium of claim 57, wherein said
2 transmitting said audit reporting data and said
3 corresponding audit schedule is performed automatically by
4 said quality information network application via a
5 distribution list.

1 59. The storage medium of claim 57, wherein said
2 transmitting said audit reporting data and said
3 corresponding audit schedule is performed manually by said
4 auditor via a distribution list provided by said auditor.

1 60. The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said
2 activity includes viewing audit reports.

1 61. The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said
2 activity includes viewing training data.

1 62. The storage medium of claim 61, wherein said
2 training data includes:
3 lectures;
4 seminars;
5 classes; and
6 resource materials.

1 63. The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said
2 activity includes viewing executive summary reports.

1 64. The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said
2 activity includes viewing reference data, said reference
3 data including:
4 industry standards;
5 government standards; and
6 proprietor-imposed standards.

65. A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for facilitating supplier auditing functions in a communications network environment, the storage medium including instructions for causing an enterprise system to implement a method comprising:

- receiving a request from a first enterprise system to contact a web site maintained by a second enterprise system;
- said second enterprise system authenticating a user ID and password of a user of said first enterprise system;
- receiving a request to initiate an activity, said activity provided by said second enterprise system among a plurality of activity options;
- said second enterprise system retrieving data from at least one database, said data corresponding to said activity selected; and
- transmitting said data to said first enterprise system;

wherein said second enterprise system includes a quality information network application for executing said activity options.

1 66. The storage medium of claim 65, further comprising
2 instructions for causing a computer to implement:

3 replicating selected data fields of a database
4 associated with said second enterprise system resulting from
5 a request by said first enterprise to submit data into a
6 supplier response form, said request associated with a first
7 of said activity options;

8 providing access to said database;

9 displaying said supplier response form;

10 receiving response data from said first enterprise
11 system, said response data provided in said supplier
12 response form;

13 storing said response data in said database; and

14 associating said response data with an entity within
15 said second enterprise system.

1 67. The storage medium of claim 66, wherein said
2 entity is a division.

1 68. The storage medium of claim 66, wherein said
2 entity is a commodity.

1 69. The storage medium of claim 66, further comprising
2 instructions for causing a computer to implement:

3 receiving an attached text file with said response
4 data.

1 70. The storage medium of claim 66 wherein said
2 associating said response data with said entity includes:
3 sending a notification to said entity; and
4 making said response data available to said entity.

1 71. The storage medium of claim 65, wherein said
2 communications network environment includes an extranet.

1 72. The storage medium of claim 65, wherein said
2 authenticating said user ID and said password is
3 accomplished via a firewall.

1 73. The storage medium of claim 65, wherein said first
2 enterprise system is a supplier.

1 74. The storage medium of claim 65, wherein said first
2 enterprise system is a contract manufacturer.

1 75. The storage medium of claim 65, wherein said first
2 enterprise system is a trading partner.